



**FEM-UNITED**

united to prevent femicide in europe

# STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

*As part of the EU-funded project ‘FEM-UNITED - United to prevent IPV/DV Femicide in Europe’, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS), together with the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), organised its first meeting with stakeholders Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2021 at the Cleopatra Hotel in Nicosia, Cyprus.*

**Femicide – the intentional killing of women [and girls] because they are women – is not only the most extreme form of gender-based violence against women but also the most violent manifestation of discrimination against them and of gender inequality.**

The aim of the meeting was to present the FEM-United project and the main findings of the research on the extent and forms of femicide in Cyprus. The stakeholders were invited to discuss the current challenges in preventing and combating IPV related femicide, and how to improve multi-agency responses.

The stakeholders meeting was attended by the President of the Cyprus Parliament, Annita Demetriou, the Cyprus Law Commissioner, Louiza Zannetou, George Koukouma (MP), as well as representatives of the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the Commissioner for the Rights of the Child, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Police, the Social Welfare Services, the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, as well as representatives of the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO).

Susana Pavlou, Director of MIGS, welcomed the participants and gave an overview of the FEM-United project, highlighting that data on femicide is not collected systematically in the EU, and that transnational tools for the study of femicide are lacking. She added that there is a need for an internationally agreed definition of femicide that would facilitate improved data collection that would lead to more effective prevention policies.

Christiana Kouta, Associate Professor at CUT, presented the data on femicide in Cyprus collected for the years 2019-2020 and the preliminary research findings of the project.

The FEM-United study identified 11 cases of femicide during the period 2019-2020, as well as 2 child victims. With the exception of one case, all took place in context of intimate partner violence.

The quantitative data collected clearly demonstrates that women of migrant background are at increased risk of femicide. The study identified that the majority of victims of femicide in Cyprus during this period were migrant women third country nationals (55%) or EU nationals (18%), while the majority of perpetrators were male Cypriot citizens (73%).

Importantly, the qualitative analysis showed that there had not been any institutional involvement prior to the femicide. Out of 11 cases, only one case of IPV was known to the authorities (the police and the social services) before the femicide took place. In this case, a protection order had been issued. Additionally, only 2 out of 10 cases were known to others such as family members, neighbours, or friends.



**FEM-UNITED**

united to prevent femicide in europe

# STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

A roundtable discussion with the stakeholders followed and the following key points and themes emerged:

- **The need for robust data collection on violence against women and femicide:**

Annita Demetriou, President of Parliament, noted the importance of having gender-specific data on femicide and that such data should be systematically collected by the Police and other institutions. She pointed out that this obligation should be provided for by law. Giorgos Koukoumas (MP) in his intervention also supported making it a legal obligation for the relevant agencies to collect data on femicide. Louiza Zanettou, Cyprus Law Commissioner also noted the urgent need for a unified data collection system for recording cases of IPV/DV.

- **The inclusion of the crime of femicide as a specific offence:**

The need for a legal definition of femicide and its inclusion in the legal framework as a separate offence emerged during the discussion. Annita Demetriou, President of the Cyprus Parliament, stated that tackling the issue of femicide should be a priority for the Cyprus Parliament and that she would push forward the Parliamentary process for including femicide as a separate offence in the Penal Code. Louiza Zannetou, Cyprus Law Commissioner expressed the willingness of her office to support this process, and suggested that the Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women Law 2021 could be amended to incorporate the crime of femicide. The representative of the Ministry of Justice also supported the inclusion of femicide in the 2021 Law on Violence against women, stressing that as a consequence the issue of femicide would fall under the mandate of the coordinating body that will be established pursuant to the law.

- **Standardized approach to risk assessment for the prevention of femicide:**

Effective risk assessment is vital to ensure the immediate safety of victims and prevent further violence, including lethal violence. Andri Andronikou, Director of SPAVO, stressed the need for a shared understanding of risk across the system that would include an agreed-upon risk assessment tool that all agencies use, and a common language to communicate risk. Specialized training for front-line professionals on the use of risk assessment tools is also essential.

- **More effective use and monitoring of protection measures:**

Christina Kaili of MIGS stressed the need for more effective use of and monitoring of protection orders issued for the protection of victims of violence against women. There is currently no data available on the number and type of protection orders and there is a need for effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that protection orders are effective in ensuring the safety and protection of women.

- **Awareness raising among the public and the media**

Another key issue raised by the participants is awareness-raising of all sectors/segments of society, to ensure that the crime of femicide is understood a public rather than a private issue, as well as to generate a sense of shared responsibility. The role of the media was also stressed by Josie Christodoulou, Advisor



**FEM-UNITED**

united to prevent femicide in europe

# STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on gender equality. This was supported by Giorgos Koukoumas (MP) who pointed out that media reporting on femicide is often problematic, obscuring the gender dimensions of the crime. He proposed the development of a Code of Conduct for journalists to prevent stereotypical portrayals of femicide in media reporting.

- **Recognizing children as victims in their own right:**

The representative of the Office for Children's Rights Child Commissioner, noted that girl children need to be recognized as victims of femicide in their own right. She stressed that girls are doubly vulnerable due to age and gender and that it is important that the issue of children living with intimate partner violence is recognised and effectively addressed.

- **More effective multi-agency cooperation and coordination:**

Andri Andronikou, Director of SPAVO pointed out that while the association provides essential services to victims of violence against women, no single organisation can ensure the safety and protection of women and their children and that there needs to be stronger coordination between services and agencies, including in the context of the Woman's House. There needs to be a holistic systemic approach to handling cases of IPV/DV in order to prevent femicide. The representative of the Ministry of Justice also stressed the need to further invest in and support the Woman's House that operates as a "one-stop-shop" crisis intervention centre for victims of violence against women.

- **Protecting migrant women from gender-based violence:**

Giorgos Koukoumas (MP) highlighted that the FEM-United study revealed that migrant women are the majority of victims of femicide in Cyprus. Migrant women often do not have access to services or lack adequate specialised support due to cultural, economic and other barriers, as well as institutional racism. He stressed that this calls for a re-examination of the Cyprus government's reservation to Article 59 of the Istanbul Convention in relation to autonomous residence permits for migrant women experiencing violence.

- **Adequate and sustainable funding for specialised services provided by NGOs:**

Andri Andronikou of SPAVO, pointed out that victim support services are assigned to specialised NGOs but without the appropriate financial and human resources. She stressed the need for adequate and sustainable funding for NGOs providing specialist services.

The meeting organised thanked the participants for their support for the project and for their constructive observations and recommendations. The project foresees at least two more meetings over the next 12 months to discuss the project progress.

---



**FEM-UNITED**

united to prevent femicide in europe

# STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

*The FEM-UNITED partnership spans five EU countries and includes the University of Malta; the Cyprus University of Technology; the Institute for Empirical Sociological Research at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; the University of Zaragoza; and the University of Porto. The project team is also comprised of advocacy NGOs and women's specialist services including the Women's Rights Foundation (Malta), and the UMAR – União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta (Portugal).*

*The FEM-UNITED team comprises of advisory board members and country focal points of the [European Observatory of Femicide \(EOF\)](#), the first European-wide network established with the aim of monitoring cases of femicide and contributing to the prevention of femicide.*



L-Università ta' Malta  
Faculty for Social Wellbeing



Universidad  
Zaragoza



Cyprus  
University of  
Technology



ifes  
Institut für empirische Soziologie  
an der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität  
Erlangen-Nürnberg



This project is co-funded by the  
Rights, Equality and Citizenship  
Programme of the European Union